

THE MILLENARIAN – POPULIST ASPECTS OF FILIPINO MARXISM

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Since Marx died a century ago this year, tremendous changes have occurred and a mass of new knowledge accumulated, much of which Marx did not and could not have anticipated.

It is, therefore, reasonable to ask whether Marxism remains valid as a mode of analysis and useful as a guide to action. Marx would have raised this question himself because he was not a dogmatic Marxist. He never regarded the theoretical system he developed as fixed and complete, as a universal and eternal truth which only had to be learned by rote and applied in mechanical fashion anywhere and at all times.

Throughout his life, Marx constantly re-examined his views, often modifying and even discarding them in the face of new developments and in response to major technological and structural changes. Dogmatism – that overwhelming concern for doctrinal purity accompanied by blindness to new developments and refusal to hear contrary opinions – is totally alien to Marx's frame of mind.

As a consistent dialectician, he considered change to be the essence of all material phenomena; and as a thoroughgoing materialist, he postulated that ideas are a reflection of an ever-changing material reality. It follows that all theories and systems of thought, including his own, must

be subjected to unremitting and unrelenting criticism. A social theory can only retain its vigor and vitality if it adapts to varied circumstances and keeps pace with developments in the real world.

Barely a decade after Marx's death, Friederich Engels, his lifelong collaborator, already noted with unconcealed distress the tendency of latter-day Marxists to reduce Marxism into a dogma, a set of cut-and-dried formulas supposedly valid everywhere and at all times. In letters to leading figures in the German working class movement in 1890, Engels deplored the reckless use of dialectical materialist method as a lever for reconstructing facts to fit preconceived schema. He warned that such an approach was not only intellectually debilitating but also harmful in practical politics. All history, wrote Engels, must be examined afresh and the conditions of existence of different societies must be studied individually.

The history of the international communist movement since 1927 bears out Engel's apprehension. His stricture against the dogmatic tendency was ignored as Marxism was elevated into the official ideology of some thirty countries covering one-third of the world's population. But none of the orthodox Marxist parties which adhered strictly to dogmatic Marxism ever won a revolution. They may have acceded to power in Mongolia and Eastern Europe but not through their own efforts, through mobilizing their people. They were installed by the Soviet army and to this day depend on Soviet support for regime survival.

By contrast, the Soviet party in 1917 and the Chinese, Yugoslav, Cuban and Vietnamese parties which achieved genuine revolutions were all led by creative Marxists who refused to be hamstrung by ideological orthodoxy. Lenin, Mao, Tito, Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro and Che Guevarra devised effective strategies that stunned the imperialists

because they used Marxism to comprehend the uniqueness of their respective societies and to firmly grasp the specific laws of their respective revolutions. It is indeed most ironic that once entrenched in power, the Soviet and Chinese parties proceeded to proclaim their unorthodox Marxism as a new orthodoxy and found enough flunkies in other countries to echo their policies and re-enact their struggles.

Thus party Marxism, whether pro-Soviet or pro-Chinese, began to resemble medieval Christian theology — unappealing to the mind and ineffectual in practice. Indeed, all the major breakthroughs in Marxist thought over the last twenty years or so have occurred outside the party structures, achieved by heretics and renegades, who, unbound by party discipline, explored hitherto neglected dimensions of contemporary reality.

This is most unfortunate from the standpoint of the movement. Larger and more impressive strides could have been made if communist parties had discarded dogmatism and allowed free rein to the dialectical process within their ranks. Straitjacketing of thought and debates among party members either results in monolithic stagnation or incessant splits.

My current research project seeks to analyze the Philippine revolutionary movement in 1930-1972 from the standpoint of Marxist political theory. To what extent has Marxism influenced the movement in the Philippines? In what areas might the Philippine movement contribute toward enriching contemporary Marxism?

Reactionary opinion-makers persistently assert that Marxism in the Philippines, being an imported ideology, has no chance to win the hearts and minds of the Filipino people other than a handful of westernized intellectuals who are themselves alienated from our native culture. It is doubtless true that Marxism is not native to the Philip-

pines (after all, Marx was German, not Filipino) and the versions of Marxism that command a following in the Philippines today either came from the Soviet Union or from China.

But Christianity, Islam and bourgeois liberalism are no less alien to native Philippine culture in terms of historical origin. Whether an ideology is purely indigenous or derived from external sources is a worthless problem. The fact that it has captured the imagination of a significant sector of the Filipino people is evidence enough that it has been indigenized, or that it is undergoing indigenization.

Like other social processes, indigenization of ideology is dialectical, hence the proper subject of inquiry is the reciprocal influence of Marxism and indigenous revolutionary tradition. The thesis of Marxism being an alien ideology carries more weight in other Asian and some African countries where the Communist parties, formed by westernized intellectuals, operated apart from and sometimes in contention with pre-Marxist indigenous revolutionary movements. In the Philippines, this thesis is patently wrong.

From its beginnings in the late 1920s, Filipino Marxism was wedged into local revolutionary tradition. The *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (PKP) formally established in 1930, grew out of *Congreso Obrero* which in turn emanated from the *gremios* or craft guilds of the 19th century. The *gremios* whose emergence preceded the *Katipunan* played an important role in the anti-Spanish revolution and in the Philippine-American war. In 1902, they formed the backbone of *Union Obrera Democratica de Filipinas* and later the *Congreso Obrero de Filipinas*. Philippine Marxism started inside *Congreso Obrero* and by the late 1920s rallied left wing elements in the federation.

By this token, the PKP deviated from the general pat-

tern of party formation in the Third World. It inherited yet another trend within the indigenous revolutionary tradition, merging in 1938 with the Socialist Party (SP) of Pedro Abad Santos. The SP resembled more the Left Socialist Revolutionary Party in Russia in 1917 rather than the industrial reformist socialist parties in western Europe and Australia.

Peasant-based, the SP exhibited all the symptoms of what we might call the "populist-millenarian syndrome", namely, 1) the transposition rather than the negation of feudal relationships and the tendency to blur class differences; 2) the role of superstition, employing amulets to bolster the morale of participants; 3) emphasis on group solidarity as illustrated by the use of the *tambuli*; 4) a distaste for book-learning and a penchant for direct action; and 5) an apocalyptic view of history as expressed by constant longing for a cataclysmic event that would usher in a great millennium. To these we might add a sixth – the adaptation of traditional religious rituals such as the reading of the *pasyon* during Lent.

The reluctance of PKP's sectarian elements to merge with SP was, in retrospect, fairly well-grounded. Although SP was no doubt revolutionary in orientation and Pedro Abad Santos was quite knowledgeable about Marxism, all the rest were populist rather than Marxists in their frames of mind. It required the intervention of Chinese and American Comintern agents to bring the two parties together in the hope that once brought under the party fold, SP militants would start to learn Marxism-Leninism. This expectation never materialized. The Socialists' distaste for books, which Pedro Abad Santos encouraged, found expression in their resistance to Marxist study circles. They believed that revolutionary consciousness is gained through direct involvement in the struggle; action, not learning, was the way to enlightenment. In fact, lead-

ing Socialists nurtured the view that reading books makes cowards out of men. Lino Dizon, Kapampangan poet and leading figure in the Socialist Party, said, "Bring Marx over here and I'll teach him Marxism." The implication is that, one with a longer experience in revolutionary combat knows more about revolutionary theory than one who merely writes about it in the British Museum.

Another feature of the SP that was carried over to the PKP, although it violated a cardinal principle of Leninism was the blurring of the demarcation line between the party and the mass organization. SP members viewed the *Aguman Ding Maldang Talapagobra* (AMT), not just as a party-led mass organization but as the party itself in disguise. To join AMT was to become an SP member.

The 1938 merger with the SP virtually undermined the Leninist character of the PKP. These pre-Marxian tendencies became more pronounced after 1942 when PKP embarked on armed struggle, first against the Japanese and later against the national government. But their counter-productive consequences were felt only after the 1950s, when the PKP retreated from the armed struggle line, a process of deterioration, which culminated in its surrender to Marcos in 1974.

The greatest handicap of the PKP was not its identification with a foreign ideology, but rather that its formal commitment to Marxism-Leninism was overwhelmed by the indigenous pre-Marxian ideologies it had inherited from the *gremios* and more importantly, from the peasant millenarian world view. Party documents and public speeches of its leadership may exhibit the prescribed forms and jargon of Marxism but the political decisions, the process of formulating the party line, were to a large extent, pragmatic.

Dogmatism in documents and pragmatism in deeds

are inseparable in a Marxist party. A dogmatic theory is so remote from reality that either the party degenerates into an ineffectual sect or it achieves political efficacy by ignoring doctrine in making practical decisions. Marxism in the PKP was a thin veneer, even in its days of glory. If one talks with middle and lower cadres, one hardly finds traces of Marxism, but the populist-millenarian syndrome stands out in abundant clarity.

Benedict Kerkvliet in *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* seeks to understand the Huk movement from the point of view of its participants and sympathizers. While the book is vulnerable to criticism for its historical inaccuracies, it presents a novel and interesting problem. Kerkvliet argues that seeing a peasant movement through the eyes of those who rebelled reveals much and makes more reasonable the actions of people which might otherwise appear irrational.

Kerkvliet probes the minds of ordinary Huks by a series of in-depth interviews. This is the first and so far, the only study of the PKP rank-and-file and mass followers during the Huk rebellion. Other studies, by relying heavily on underground publications and party documents, capture only the thinking of leaders and theoreticians. Local cadres, those actually immersed in day-to-day struggles, do not write documents and in many cases do not even bother to read them. There is a vast discrepancy between party documents and propaganda material on the one hand and the governing ideology of the mass movement on the other. The former is invariably couched in Marxist language but the latter displays the lingering influence of millenarian populism.

Kerkvliet is right in focusing attention on the effective rank-and-file ideology because this, more than the Marxist image the party tries to project, determines the nature, di-

rection and internal processes of the movement. His fatal error which exposes his book to serious attacks lies in his methodology. He gave no allowance for the tendency of his informants to tell cock-and-bull stories for any of the following reasons: first, they were trying to cover up past connections with the Communist Party; second, they were afraid of admitting communist affiliation because that would make them liable to prosecution under the anti-subversion law; and finally, Kerkvliet as an American was naturally distrusted by any real Filipino communist.

A captive of his own methodology, Kerkvliet arrives at the grossly erroneous thesis that the PKP did not initiate, organize and lead the Huk rebellion. All the critical reviews of his book zero in on this fundamental flaw but the ones by William J. Pomeroy in the *Journal of Peasant Studies* and Jesus Lava in the *Journal of Contemporary Asia* are the most devastating because they are based on first-hand knowledge of the events described which Kerkvliet wrongly reconstructed and therefore misconstrued.

Kerkvliet's thesis is just as assailable on conceptual grounds. He conceived of the PKP the way it wanted people to see it, i.e., as a unified monolithic organization of Marxist-Leninist cadres. Not finding traces of Marxism-Leninism among peasant-interviewees, Kerkvliet concluded that the Huk movement was not communist and the party must have played a very insignificant role. Pomeroy and Lava demolished this by pointing out that the leaders of the PKM and the HMB down to the lowest level were in fact PKP members.

I believe that the PKP was indeed the vanguard of the Huk rebellion, but argue that the PKP itself, from the provincial committees to the cells in the villages and military units, was dominated by the millenarian-populist rather than the Marxist-Leninist world view. All PKP members

claimed to be Marxists but only in the sense that they belonged to a party which confessed to be so.

Marxism as a perspective, a method of analysis and a guide to action is scarcely visible at the lower levels in the party hierarchy, whereas the millenarian-populist outlook prevails in the thinking of some central committee and politburo members. There is proof in his book *He Who Rides the Tiger* that Luis Taruc was never a Marxist although he was for a long time a PKP member. Although Casto Alejandrino still considers himself a communist, unlike Taruc, he gives no hint whatsoever of the Marxist method in his thinking. He would assert that revolutionaries are born, not made, and points to Alexander the Great's biography as the book that influenced him most as commander-in-chief of the HMB.

The PKP was Marxist in self-image but Marxism was never its governing ideology. Marxism was no more than a means to justify, legitimize or rationalize policy-decisions pragmatically arrived at. Hence the discrepancy between avowed ideology and political practice, between writings of the theoreticians and the outlook of its members.

PKP derived its strength from the fact that it was integrated in the indigenous revolutionary tradition but its chief weakness lay in the failure to transcend that tradition, to set the movement on a genuine Marxist footing. In the course of armed struggle, the PKP nurtured a millenarian-populist outlook because that was the easiest way to rally the peasants. But in the 1950s, it had to pay the price for this. The party-led HMB suffered the fate of all other millenarian movements, i.e., it collapsed like a pack of cards the moment its apocalyptic vision of seizure of power in two years was dissolved by the powerful counteroffensive of JUSMAG-AFP (Joint US Military Advisory Group – Armed Forces of the Philippines). The party it-

self collapsed with the HMB; reinforcing my earlier contention that the demarcation line between the party and the mass organization was blurred and the millenarian mentality prevailed even in the party structure among party cadres.

Efforts to maintain the party in the midst of repression did not prosper: the single-file policy virtually liquidated the PKP. Ironically, it was also at this juncture that the party organization was in utter disarray. Dr. Jesus Lava, having more time to reflect upon the past, produced some of the more important theoretical contributions by any Filipino Marxist. Two pamphlets he wrote in this period of hibernation are *Democracy versus Communism* and *Lessons from Our Struggle*. The latter is important because it anticipated some of the most significant conclusions of Amado Guerrero's *Specific Characteristics of Our People's War*.

As a general rule, intellectuals are the bearers of Marxist philosophy, particularly in the Third World where workers and peasants have no access to formal education and no revolutionary movement exists to provide them with a structured counter-education. Since the exploitative conditions are inadequate to imbue the workers with political consciousness, Lenin said, Marxism will have to be introduced from without, i.e., by the revolutionary intelligentsia who, in the Russian context, were *declassé* elements from the upper strata of society.

In the Philippines, this was not the case. The PKP was founded by working class leaders; there were no academics or student activists in its founding congress in 1930. Intellectuals like Dr. Vicente Lava did not join the party until 1936. Even at its peak in the immediate post-war years, the PKP did not attract intellectuals in large numbers.

Anti-intellectualism was one of the PKP's most endur-

ing traditions. Ironically, it had to be the intellectuals in its leadership who were the most ardent advocates of anti-intellectualism. This handful of PKP intellectuals did little theoretical work. They lectured and scribbled party documents but never undertook serious research and reflection aimed at uncovering the specific features of Philippine society and the specific laws of the Philippine revolution. They thus adopted hook, line and sinker the Soviet analysis and only substantiated this with Philippine examples. Theoretical work as such was never given due recognition.

The PKP never truly appreciated the potential role of students and intellectuals in the revolution. Attempts to form a communist-led student organization in 1950 did not prosper. The party gained some headway in the University of the Philippines (UP) and some other universities only in the early 1960s, not because it gave priority to this area of work but because it recruited a group of self-taught Marxists in the Student Cultural Association of UP (SCAUP) who turned out to be most daring, effective and energetic cadres.

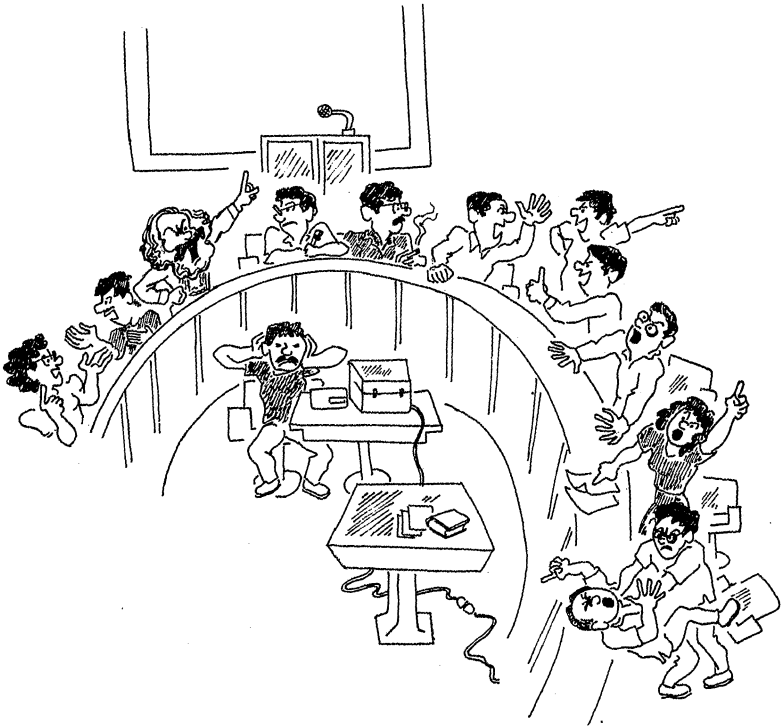
But the PKP's love affair with student militants was short-lived, for the latter broke away to form a new Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Unlike the typical PKP cadre, the CPP founders were fairly well-trained in Marxism, i.e., in Mao's version of it. The level of theoretical competence was many times higher in CPP than in PKP. In drawing the line of demarcation with the PKP, the CPP turned out a spate of significant theoretical essays. *Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party* and Amado Guerrero's *Philippine Society and Revolution* are some of the best examples. From 1930 to the present, the PKP never produced anything comparable in scope and theoretical rigor.

For lack of time, I will only summarize the points I had meant to develop at length. One, Mao Tse-tung

Thought played a positive role in undertaking the rectification within the communist movement and drawing the demarcation line with the old party. Two, the impact of the so-called Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China on the Philippine movement had two seemingly contradictory aspects: it fostered creativity, initiative and self-activity from below and it also fostered the spirit of anti-intellectualism among intellectuals themselves. Three, martial law restricted to the narrowest possible compass the spirit of creativity, initiative and self-activity, and hastened the institutionalization of the new party. Four, anti-intellectualism within the framework of an institutionalized party fostered dogmatism of a type that was reminiscent of the old party. Five, its continued involvement in the armed struggle and clandestine work under severest repression militated against further dogmatization. Six, the convergence with liberation theology and the worldwide discrediting of Mao Tse-tung Thought initiated by the new leadership in China will hopefully stimulate local Communists to think for themselves and develop Marxism in a creative way. Seven, Marxism in the Philippines today will no longer be the sole responsibility of party theoreticians. Marxism has gained respectability in academic circles and non-party scholars could contribute much in the necessary processes of indigenizing Marxism and raising the indigenous revolutionary movement to a higher theoretical plane. Eight, internal debate (i.e., polemics inside Marxist parties and polemics including non-party Marxists) ought not to be discouraged but on the contrary promoted because it would help restore the vigor and vitality of Marxism and avert the drift towards dogmatism.

In conclusion, let me come full circle to my first point. Marxism as a philosophical tradition is not final and complete. To retain its relevance for our time and its utility for our struggle, it has to be continuously enriched by the practical experience of revolutionary movements every-

where. Filipino Marxists, endowed with a wealth of revolutionary experience dating back to the Spanish period, can contribute to this development of Marxism; but they can only do so if they shed off dogmatism and allow free rein to the dialectical process within the movement.



OPEN FORUM

Question (Q): It is a very grave critique to say that the PKP did not have any socialist character. What were the un-Marxist policies and programs of this party? And what qualities of a party would make you call it Marxist?

Nemenzo (N): I would not say unsocialist. Since the PKP has its socialist program, I would consider it a socialist party. But Marxism was not the governing ideology of the party. There were only a few Marxists at the top who were writing the documents. Decisions were made, rather, on pragmatic grounds. For example, the united front strategy just before World War II completely blurred the class differentiations. What was created was some sort of political party which pieced together such strange characters as Gregorio Aglipay and Jose Topacio Dueño. There was a theory, for example, (which I think is not Marxist) that peasants are also proletarians because they can be proletarianized by membership in the party. In other words, being a proletariat has become a subjective rather than an objective relationship. I am not denying that there were very competent Marxist theoreticians in the party. But there were so very few of them, and they did not go down the line.

Q: It was a united front against who?

N: Against fascism. But the way it was constituted, it ended up as a united front against Quezon. This was not even the concept of a united front adopted by the Comintern. What was formed was really a separate party.

Q: Why don't we start out with a definition of Marxism?

N: It will probably take me one whole semester to come up with an acceptable definition. Briefly, Marxism refers to that body of knowledge or theories developed both by Marx and the latter-day Marxists. It is, therefore, not limited to what Marx said, but embodies the contribution of Marxist scholars and activists to this day. These definitions are difficult to formulate. That is why, instead of defining the concept of millenarianism, I presented it as a syndrome — an inventory of symptoms, rather than a definition that would please our friends from the Philosophy department.

Q: You said that the intellectual level of the new party formed in 1968 was higher than the old party due to the presence of intellectuals recruited from the universities. Later on, however, you went on to say that this same party deteriorated into anti-intellectualism. What factors were responsible for this? Secondly, you attributed the failure of the PKP, to some extent to the predominance of millenarian thinking among the mass membership. Does the presence of millenarian ideology really work against the revolutionary movement? To what extent did this tendency actually cause the failure of the Huk rebellion?

N: I think the rise of anti-intellectualism in the new party was to a large extent, an influence of the Chinese cultural revolution. In China, at that time, intellectuals and their theoretical studies were being denigrated. All that one had to do, then, was to read the little red book. I said the founders of the new party had a higher intellectual level precisely because they have been reading the classics, even before the propagation of the little red book. It was a long process.

With regards to your second question, I treated the

problem of the millenarian movement very carefully using the dialectical point of view. Actually, I did not attribute the failure of the party to millenarianism alone. But the party did fail to transcend it. At the beginning, it was even a source of strength. It was a very effective way of getting people to move in a very short period of time. At a certain point, however, it becomes a liability and an obstacle to further growth. A Marxist party should always try to transcend it. This was what the old party failed to do. I am not sure now, if the new party has achieved this.

Q: Was Marx a Marxist? Is the National Democratic Front the new Communist Party of the Philippines?

N: Marx once said, "After all, I am not a Marxist." He meant that he was not a Marxist in the way his ideas had been stripped. He was actually repudiating the dogmatic habits of thought of some of his followers. Nevertheless, I think it would be crazy to say that Marx was not a Marxist, in the same way as saying that Christ was not a Christian.

I understand that the National Democratic Front is not the new Communist Party. Rather, it is a united front — the Communist Party plus other groups. The NDF, then, is a loose united front aimed at the very specific objective of doing away with what it calls the "US-Marcos Dictatorship". It is, therefore, not an organization standing for socialism, but it is one trying to do away with the repressive government and the lingering influences of US imperialism.

Q: It is quite a paradox that, on one hand, millenarianism is the motive force of the revolution, and on the other hand, it has proven to be the nemesis of the PKP. But what are your proposals? How can Marxist theory, as a revolutionary theory, transcend this tendency?

N: This lecture is actually a series of paradoxes because the dialectic approach really exists in a paradoxical form. Transcending millenarianism does not mean separating yourself from it and then forgetting it. It means being a part of it and developing it further.

People may join the movement for populist reasons. But when they are there, the movement should make a special effort to help them understand the roots of their grievances. Millenarianism is really the primitive articulation of built-in grievances. But it also carries with it a failure to trace and understand their roots in the existing system. Weitling, for instance, strongly expounded on the idea of retaining the trappings of millenarianism in the labor movement. He came out with statements like: If you are a revolutionary, you should not stay in the British Museum writing *Das Kapital*. You should be out in the streets, setting up barricades and firing guns. Marx had answered: Ignorance has never helped anybody yet.

In short, it is not usually knowledge that pushes you into waging a class struggle. It is your grievance. It is the feeling that the system is oppressive, stemming from personal experience. But it must go beyond mere indignation. It has to be rooted in the system. And Marxism, as a method of analysis, is a way of finding that root.

This protest movement against the assassination of Aquino, for example, can end up at just that level. As we know, grief and indignation can mobilize millions of people. But can it be sustained? A revolutionary movement is not just an outburst. It is a sustained process. It will probably go zigzagging every now and then and you will never understand why unless you understand the historical process as a whole. Millenarianism, then, is the easiest way to fire up people's enthusiasm. The promise, for instance, that the millenium – the good society – is just around the corner, just waiting for one cataclysmic event to usher it

in, is very easy to understand. But the party should try to build from there.

During the Japanese occupation, the best way to rally the people was just to say: "Forget our class differences and let us fight the Japanese." The slogan, then, was "Anti-Japanese Above All". I interviewed a lot of people and asked them the kind of political education they got as Party members during the war. They answered that all they got were lectures on "Anti-Japanese Above All". Nobody becomes a Marxist with that. However, it is something a millenarian can easily accept.

Behind these simplified views, Marxism can take on some Marxist trappings. The group of Teodoro Asedillo of Laguna, for instance, acquired all the characteristics of a millenarian movement. (Fernando Poe made a movie based on his life. It was, however, never mentioned, that Asedillo was a Communist who was forced to go underground having been involved in a rather violent strike on one of the tobacco companies in Manila.) Asedillo's movement involved the use of amulets and the celebration of rituals. They even linked up with another millenarian leader called Encalado. It was a rather good version of a primitive rebellion. But it was staged by "communists."

During my PKP days, there was one person who had to be tried. He was a very good fighter. But he was charged with eating the son of his sister. He thought it was a way of gaining invulnerability. There was also another who had to be brought to Manila because of a very big stomach. When the doctors operated on him, they found out that he ate an *anting-anting*. *Kaya pala ang tapang-tapang noong panahon ng himagsikan*. And yet, that fellow was an alternate member of the Central Committee.

Even in the leadership, therefore, the influence of mil-

lenarianism was quite strong. I just do not know about the new party.

Q: How about intellectual elitism among Marxist intellectuals?

N: That is the other side of the same coin. The intellectuals in a party are able to wield unchallenged power if anti-intellectualism is widespread, because that drives other intellectuals away. When there is no intellectual work, there is no intellectual interaction and debate. In effect, anti-intellectualism actually entrenches the intellectuals that are already within the party structure.

Q: Is it true that Marxism cannot take root in the Philippines primarily because of the strong Catholic foothold in the country? Is there really a clash between Christian faith and Marxist ideology?

N: That is a very interesting question. I think that the old party was rather unwise in undertaking a very militant atheistic propaganda. *Lalo ka lang nakikipagsalungatan niyan.* In the Huk campaign, the Catholic Church had an organization which played an active role in counterinsurgency.

We can easily exaggerate the role of the church in our society. I am not underestimating it. But it can easily be exaggerated by saying that 80% of our people are Roman Catholic. (My hometown is supposed to be one of the most Catholic towns in Cebu because everybody goes to church. But when the priest starts the sermon, the men also start leaving. It was not considered macho to listen to the priest. Now, since the husband is the one who usually calls the shots when it comes to political matters, then the priests really have no influence.)

A new development in the church (which I think was very well handled by the new party), is the emergence of what is called the Christian Left – the Theologians of Liberation. There is now a serious effort, on the part of the Christians to break away from the image of the church as an ally of reaction, repression and obscurantism. They see that the church must come to terms with and understand the problems of the modern world, if it is to survive. They see the need to transform the church from a repressive institution to a liberative one. Many of them have found out that Christian theology, if properly interpreted, is not really all that different from Marxism. On the other hand, I think that the Marxists have also come to realize that religion, as distinguished from the Catholic church is not really the sworn enemy of the revolutionary movement. All over the world, especially in Latin America, there is growing convergence between Christians seeking a scientific interpretation of the world in Marxism and Marxists trying to recapture the ethical values of original Marxism in theological discourse.

Q: Are you saying that the revolutionary movement has not really made much headway, or has not succeeded because it is not Marxist enough?

N: I would not say that it has not succeeded. I think that it is gaining a lot of ground.

Q: But that is not the point. You said that it succumbed to Marcos in 1974 precisely because it was not intellectual enough; it was not Marxist enough.

N: I was referring to the old party and its failure to understand the realities of the contemporary world because of its theoretical inadequacy. For example, the decision in 1950 to make an early bid for power was based on

a lot of assumptions which, if enlightened by Marxist analysis, they would not have fallen into.

Q: So indeed, if they had been more enlightened in the Marxist sense, they might have succeeded?

N: Yes. The setbacks were due to wrong decisions, which, in turn, stemmed from an inadequate grasp of Marxist theory.

Q: So, is the Marxist prescription, i.e., a Marxist revolution, the solution to Philippine problems today?

N: Marxism does not prescribe a way of solving problems. The main body of Marxist work deals with an analysis. It is a tool for analyzing existing reality. You can never solve Philippine problems unless you understand them and I think Marxism is a very useful guide for such an understanding. I suppose that answer is satisfying enough to the intelligence agents around. I am not prescribing a revolution.

Q: Is that not a bit dogmatic; therefore, perhaps contradicting yourself?

N: No. Because dogmatism is accepting propositions unquestioningly, without testing it in practice. Marxism is a method of analysis which you have to keep on testing in practice and enriching through your experience. That is not dogmatism. That is not what I mean by dogmatism, anyway.

Q: Why then, should we fault our early revolutionaries and the PKP, when they were still trying to find their footing? They had to begin somewhere. If they were not Marxist enough, that's hardly their fault. They had to con-

tend with the conditions existing then. The grievances were a starting point. I don't think it is quite fair for us, with hindsight today, to fault the beginnings of the revolutionary movement.

N: I am not at all denigrating the past. I want to emphasize this. I am saying that we should learn from the past. Just because they have made mistakes does not mean we should completely ignore the contributions they have made. Let us learn from them, including their failures, so that these may not be repeated. I hope I made that clear for my friends in the PKP who are around.

Q: An intellectual, to me, is one committed to a systematic study of objective reality and its theoretical possibilities, primarily through the scientific method which emphasizes empirical content and the provisional characters of its findings. If I so define an intellectual, I think there have been very few intellectuals in Philippine society, I mean, very few, even as we adopt the proposition that intellectuals usually are, in every society, minorities. As a matter of fact, I do not think it is only in the PKP and various organizations antedating it that you might see a paucity of intellectuals. Even in the university, you will find an extreme paucity of them. Anti-intellectualism seems to be one of the very basic characteristics of our people. I am not trying to morally find fault with our people nor to denigrate them. It makes no difference whether one is talking about democratic revolution from the center. In both cases, you find quite a bit of anti-intellectualism. You had exposed this tendency in the left. I think it would be sufficient to point out that, as far as the president of this republic is concerned, when he speaks of the light of the mind as something that has to be undertaken in the comforts of the academe, I think that is also anti-intellectualism of a sort. So, to me, anti-intellectualism is

a characteristic of this society. It is one thing we have to reckon with, even as we try to fashion a revolutionary way out of the situation we find ourselves in today.

N: I don't think I used the word "intellectual" in the sense that you used it. I used it loosely, to mean people with so-called high educational attainment. Intellectuals (in this loose sense), joined the party and, sort of, became ashamed of their being intellectuals. They did not perform their roles which (coinciding with the proper role mentioned by the earlier speaker) is to do a systematic study of society. Instead, they became popularizers of Marxism. Intellectuals — in your sense, rigorous theoreticians — are needed in a revolutionary movement, as well as in any political movement. The working class movement needs intellectuals to help formulate policies and to analyze situations. That is their role. In the first place, intellectuals cannot make a revolution. Only the workers can make it.

But there was not only a shortage of them in the party. There was even a rather unconscious attempt to denigrate their role. The tendency was to be satisfied with imported categories and just look for analogies to help illustrate what these categories mean. Not everybody in the movement should be intellectuals. I only mean that intellectuals have that capacity to do theoretical work. In the old party, it was not properly done. And I think, the movement had to pay the price for it.

Intellectuals in the university are also supposed to be as rigorous as you would like them to be. But in the university, even if you make mistakes in your studies, you don't have to pay the price (except for criticisms by colleagues). In a political movement, a mistake may cost the lives of so many people. So, there is a greater responsibility for theoretical workers to really concentrate in their line of work.

Now, what fosters anti-intellectualism in the university? I think it is the absence of continuing debate. This is an old song that students have heard from me so many times. If we do not discuss or debate, nor challenge each other's position, everybody will be so complacent.

The same is true for a movement, especially a party which expels anybody who disagrees. When there is no debate, the dialectical process is stunted. The habit of careful analysis is lost. Those at the top can say whatever they like, because everybody else is sure to follow.

Q: Has there been any original contribution to Marxist theory from the new party? Is democratic centralism conducive to anti-intellectualism?

N: To the first question — not really much. Nevertheless, I would consider *Specific Characteristics of Our People's War* to be some kind of original contribution. At least, it is an attempt to come to grips with the realities of the Philippine situation which was quite different from the way a military strategy, for instance, was formulated in the 1950s. I think it is quite original. Recently though, I discussed this with Dr. Jesus Lava and apparently, he arrived at more or less the same conclusion.

I am not saying that Lava's paper, *Lessons from Our Struggle* influenced Amado Guerrero. I am just saying that two organizations, hating each other, but exposed to the same social reality, may reach a similar conclusion. I think that by doing this — thinking for ourselves instead of borrowing from the Soviet Union or China — the Filipino movement can indeed contribute a lot to the development of Marxism in the whole world. These are instances — flashes of insight — and I hope they would be encouraged more.

On the second issue raised, I don't think democratic centralism necessarily leads to anti-intellectualism, as long as the democratic aspect is not forgotten. It becomes a ritual and only centralism prevails. I do not know about the new party, but that was our problem with the old one. You are supposed to have the freedom to express yourself within a circle but you cannot campaign your views among people in other circles. Those in the leadership can always meet. That was not considered factionalism. But if you belong to a minority, and you meet with other like-minded people, that was considered factionalism. It was punishable by expulsion and more. So, I think, if democratic centralism is implemented properly, i.e., not having a centralized authority but really respecting the rights of people to oppose, argue their case, and to organize for their ideas, it will not necessarily be anti-intellectual.

Q: To what extent does the communist movement accept the participation of homosexuals, especially today when they are seen as a potentially strong force?

N: I am not aware of the position of either party on this. But I can say that dividing people or defining forces in terms of sex is rather counter-productive and is likely to lead to more confusion. I think that the radical movement in Australia and elsewhere, suffered a lot because of these tendencies. Sex differentiations are emphasized over class differentiations. The women's liberation movement, I think, has done great disservice to the left in the West. That also applies to the gay liberation movement. Anyway, I don't think these reflect the thinking of any of the parties. I really don't know what they think about this.

Q: I am grateful for some of the things mentioned by Dr. Nemenzo. However, I would like to point out some things which were not so accurate in the context in which

they were put. Maybe, I am the PKP friend that he was referring to.

We have to remember the historical factors with which the PKP operated. It is correct to say that the beginnings of the PKP and the SPP were populist, in a sense. But it is because these parties were not composed of people who were educated, or who have gone to universities. They joined the movement, not with romantic notions about it, but because they were the ones affected by it. They saw the need for it. The founding of the PKP was made on the basis of a necessity. And it was not just the intellectuals (or those who were educated) who can articulate this necessity. As a matter of fact, many of them were peasants and workers. The history of the PKP stems from the *gremios*, and the labor unions (in the Obrero Democratico de Filipinas). The party did not choose its people on the basis of intellectual capability. It simply could not choose. It simply could not just pick out those who could understand and write theories. Nor those who could profess Marxism. A truly communist party will rally the people. It will accept in its ranks all those who are sincerely affected and are willing to wage a struggle. The PKP had members, for instance, who up to now cannot read nor write. Most of them cannot go to school the way the rest of us can. They do not have the opportunity. Within that context, perhaps, it can be understood how difficult it was (and still is) to make Marxists out of them. In the first place, it is even doubtful whether those who are professing Marxism are really Marxists in the true sense of the word. In fact, Dr. Nemenzo should be more acquainted with this problem.

Dr. Nemenzo also had no right to refer to or insinuate things about the developments after 1972. I think it is very clear, even in his words, that from 1972 to the present is

another story. He also said that he was partly responsible for the development and care of the members' understanding. He then shares responsibility for that ideological level.

I would also wish that Dr. Nemenzo would put into proper historical context the founding of the CPP-Mao Tse-tung Thought. It was founded in 1968 and it was a break-away from the PKP. It was mainly composed of people who have gone to the universities, especially in the beginning. So, it may not be so balanced (in terms of intellectual thinking, work and contribution) to compare only on that aspect.

Dr. Nemenzo also asserted that the PKP surrendered in 1974. It is not true. It never surrendered. This assertion merely follows that of the Western press which branded the political settlement in 1974 as a surrender. As a member of the PKP, I am telling you that it was not a surrender but a political settlement. The PKP is very much active and very much into organizing, not as a surrendered party but as an independent Filipino party.

Finally, there was, indeed, a strong trace of anti-intellectualism, especially during the time of Dr. Nemenzo, in the PKP. I was a young member then and was supposed to be under him (together with a few others I can see here). The traces were there, but again I am more competent to say that after 1972, it was another story. I am not referring to the fact that Dr. Nemenzo is no longer in the party. Don't misconstrue me on that. But what I am saying is that there is development and change is always happening. It is really for pointing these out that I find this afternoon's lecture more gratifying.

Comment: Are you saying that the 1974 political set-

tlement was a product of a much more theoretically competent PKP?

Q: I can sense the temperament of the audience. But we are not just playing with tendencies. A revolution is not a matter of excitement — of being thrilled and this kind of romanticism. When the PKP entered into a political settlement, it was a well-thought of decision. It was a decision stemming from a desire to be able to approach organizational work in a different way — a much more efficient and convenient way. However you look at it, there is a difference between operating in the open and operating underground. There is more opportunity to propagate and disseminate your ideas as a party when you are in the open. Things like these should be weighed. The 1974 settlement was an attempt to transform the PKP into a legal party. It was premised on the desire to rally and organize more. The party believes that not only the intellectuals are important in a revolution. Although we recognize their importance, the larger masses of the people are far more important and more decisive in the movement.

N: If I may use a Shakespearean phrase, “A rose by any other name smells just as sweet.” Whether you call it surrender or political settlement, I do not really see the difference in the objective situation. (Sometimes we are so fond of coining euphemisms for things that are not so palatable.) In 1957, for example, when we encouraged comrades to give up and take advantage of the grace period offered by the Anti-Subversion Law, it was not called surrender. It was called “return to civilian life.” But I think it amounted to the same thing.

You said we should take into account that the PKP consisted of workers in the 1930s. But I think those workers were theoretically competent. I was really referring

more to the members of the SPP. You say they have a low level of education and, therefore, cannot grasp Marxist concepts. I see no reason, then, why they should be brought into the party. The party is not an organization of just anybody who wants to wage a revolution. The party is the inner core that provides the leadership and direction of the total movement. Of course, everybody who wants to fight in a revolution should participate in the revolutionary movement. But there is no need to be a member of the party. I think this is a clear indication of what I pointed out earlier about the line of difference between the party and the mass organizations. If the will and readiness to fight is the only qualification for membership, what, then, is the difference between a party member and a member of the mass organization? I think that if it is really a Leninist party, it has to bring in people who are capable of being leaders in their own right, capable of using Marxist analysis for understanding their specific and concrete problems and making decisions on their own. A real Leninist party, then, is a collection of leaders, not a collection of followers. So, theoretical competence has always been required. It has always been considered as an essential requirement for party membership. If this is set aside, it is still a party, *but it is not a Leninist party.*

I interviewed many people, asking them why they were in the PKP during the war. They said that they were good fighters. That was the qualification. Be a good Huk and you become a party member. You first join the Hukbalahap. Later on, party assignments are given to you, even without your prior knowledge that these are indeed party works.

There really was a blurring of distinctions between the two. If Lenin's criteria for party membership was supposed to be in use, that was certainly violated in this case. Lenin insisted on a clear distinction between the two categories.

Of course, I cannot speak with authority about PKP policies after 1972. And I'm glad I can't. I don't dare assume that responsibility. But I can comment, the way any citizen can comment on the objective consequences of the policies that are taken. (In the same manner that we, even if we were not old enough to have been members of the Katipunan, can comment on the policies of that organization.)

I would like to be enlightened on the theoretical basis for the political settlement of 1974. I cannot understand that up to now. I am glad if, as you say, the anti-intellectualist tradition is no longer there. That's very good news to me. I am happy about that. If that is so, perhaps we can see a revival and revitalization of the old party.

But you cannot deny the fact that anti-intellectualism was very strong. I was not responsible for it. It was already there even before we joined. And it was so strong that in 1950, the Jose Lava leadership even issued a political transmission on the "Correct Concept of Intellectuals", drawing the distinction between intellectuals in the Philippines and intellectuals in Russia. (This document was later captured and used as evidence.) It said that in Russia, during the time of Lenin, intellectuals were people who belonged to the moneyed class. Education was very expensive and access to it was denied to many people. What made the Russian intellectuals vacillating, then, according to the document, was not so much the fact that they were intellectuals (or were educated), but rather that they belonged to the marginal classes. In the Philippines, the document continued, this was not the case. Education is much more accessible to a broad number of people. Even peasants and workers reach high levels of education. In other words, the Filipino intellectual was almost the microcosm of the larger society.

I do not really see the importance of that line on the later behavior of the PKP, but there was indeed such a document in 1950.

Q: Members of the vanguard party are not only leaders in the intellectual sense, but are, foremost, leaders of the masses. We have to take into account the realities of our society: for a long period of time (up to the present) the greater number of our people are either in the rural areas or are members of the working class. Of course, it is possible to make a peasant (even a non-schooled peasant who just finished a minimal education) understand Marxism. That is given. But definitely, there is a difference in the rate of this understanding. It is easier, theoretically speaking, for one who has a foundation in the university to understand Marx, than one who has none. It is true that it has become difficult to delineate between participating, in the struggle (and in the movement) and participating with theoretical guidance. It has always been a problem, for instance, that a lot of pragmatism is involved on the part of the peasants. But what can they do? They are only guided by a desire to change the situation and not necessarily guided by high theoretical considerations. We still have to recognize that reality. We cannot just summarily say that the party failed to guide its members theoretically. Right now, it is not difficult for us to talk about theories here, because we all have the opportunity to grasp them.

N: I think that it would be useful to bring in at this point Antonio Gramsci's distinction between an intellectual in the generic sense and an organic intellectual. An organic intellectual is one who possesses intellectual competence but who did not go through formal education. He was brought up by the movement itself, through the educational system internal to it. Gramsci said at the begin-

ning, a party may be led by intellectuals in the generic sense, but that, if the party is really a good one, it would be able to develop structures within that would bring out its so-called organic intellectuals. It is not quite correct to say that those who go to the universities are better able to comprehend Marxist concepts. I have seen uneducated workers showing greater capability of comprehending Marxist concepts and, more importantly, of using them.

There is no need to recite all the characteristics of historical dialectical materialism and explain the theory of surplus value to be able to make day-to-day decisions from a dialectical materialist point of view. When that itself is lacking, I cannot say how you can possibly lead the masses to a revolutionary transition.

Anybody who has the charm can lead the people, the masses, anytime. But a member of the party is not just a leader. He is also a revolutionary leader. In other words, he must be capable of helping people transcend their immediate experience. When such a quality is not possessed by the people brought into the party, the Leninist and revolutionary character of that party is weakened.

Q: I think the lecturer and the previous commentator have one trait in common, i.e., the Leninist tendency towards elitism. The idea of a vanguard party, anti-intellectualism, distinctions between organic and other kinds of intellectuals made by a latter-day Marxist saint are all elitist concepts. It seems to be so un-Marxist in a very real sense, because, if Marx probably meant anything to many people, it was because of his really humanist thrust toward non-elitism. The thrust of Lenin toward the party of leaders that shall be the repository of the guiding light and philosophy of a revolutionary movement in fact, could be branded as un-Marxist.

Marx seems to be — especially in his definition of the all-around new man — the revolutionary man, who is universal, not in the Enlightenment's sense, but in being able to synthesize in himself all the contradictions. So, there is no longer a contraction between artists and philistines, intellectuals and mass leaders, leader and non-leader, etc. Each man shall be all men and in the fullness, emerges a truly new man, which Marx, it seems to me, tried to work for and explain. It is, in fact, in this light, that he felt so deeply troubled by the tendencies of the technological advances and the industrial revolution. So many men were becoming non-men, precisely because of their being constricted into specialization.

The second point is related to the first. Probably, there is a flaw in the way a lot of Marxists in the Philippines understand Marxism. There is a flaw in your remark about the women's lib movement being a disservice to the revolutionary movement in the world and the homosexuals' capability to become truly participative in putting forth a truly revolutionary movement. One thing that Marx taught us was to be able to come to grips with the *realpolitik* and the material-objective conditions. And the material objective conditions of human beings is that we are men and women, and that women, universally, have had a very oppressed position. Homosexuals are here and they are humans, too. Of course, you lectured about history and not philosophy. So I guess, you can be pardoned.

N: I do not wish to be pardoned because I also understand Marx's concept of man. This concept is an ideal which can only blossom in a communist society. But of course, he did say that things must be judged in terms of their present material reality. In other words, in order to achieve that ideal, you will have to struggle, and this struggle will have to bear the characteristics of society. For

example, this so-called specialization – that there are leaders and there are those who follow – is a characteristic that necessarily arises from the present structured hierarchical society. We cannot move on to the ideal without starting from there. So, I do not think that Lenin's concept of a vanguard party violates Marx's notion of an ideal human being in ideal society. It is a means towards it. It is a recognition of present-day realities and of the requirements of the struggle in the present context.

Now, insofar as the women and gays are concerned, I don't think they should be excluded from participating in the revolutionary movement. But are the women or the gays as particular forces the ones who will build history? Is it sexes that will determine it or is it classes? Whether we like it or not, men and women will have to work together. The relationship between man and woman is very different from the relationship between a capitalist and a worker. You participate not as a woman, not as part of the women's movement, but as a worker. That is the attitude that Marxists take on the issue.

Q: I feel that your statement is very unsociological. Sex roles are determined by production relations as well. I think that is a lesson we learn from sociology and anthropology.

N: I don't know what kind of sociology you have, but what I'm saying is that I'm interpreting, not necessarily prescribing the Marxist interpretation of this.

Q: Nevertheless, we cannot simply categorize men as simply being men and women as simply being women in this society. These are culturally-specific definitions. Therefore, they are defined not simply biologically. In fact, biological definitions are, in a sense, very secondary.

Q: A point was raised earlier on the similarity between the PKP and the CPP's analyses as gleaned from the *Specific Characteristics of Our People's War*. If we are for the reunification of both parties, I don't think we should justify such a reunification by similarities but rather by their differences.

N: As I stated earlier, I am not prescribing unity or differentiation. That's for the members of both parties to decide. Since I don't belong to any of them, I should not suggest anything. I am just saying that there are similarities in the conclusions derived from their own experiences. I am not saying that these are sufficient bases for reunification. In fact, I don't think that they are sufficient at all. But there are objective facts that show similarities. Maybe, this was not even the PKP analysis. I was talking of an analysis done by an individual who happened to be the PKP General Secretary at that time. Dr. Jesus Lava saw what Amado Guerrero, based on his own experience, also saw about the specific laws of a people's war in a country like the Philippines.

Q: I think you have been quite unfair in your comments on the role of women's movements in a revolutionary struggle. History has shown, even in our case, that women have played important roles.

N: Believe me, I am not anti-women. I love women! I am not saying that women should not participate in a revolution. I am not saying that they should not organize themselves into separate groups. But some women's lib movements in the West draw the dividing line between sexes blurring the class differentiations. I saw that in Canberra (Australia), with my own eyes last year. There was a peace rally that was supposed to include anybody who realized the threat of war. But then came along these so-called Marxist lesbian-feminists, carrying it upon their head

that men are the cause of war, and that the struggle, therefore, should be directed against men. It is this kind of mentality that I call a great disservice. This is not to say anything about womanhood. This is not a scandal against womanhood. I am critical of that kind of women's ideology because I have seen — and I think it is an objective fact — that it has done great damage to the unity of revolutionary forces in the West.

Q: Isn't coming out with a critique of the PKP, today, a bit unbecoming of a former member like you?

N: You are rather unfair in ascribing to me something which I did not even intend to do. My work is not an expose. I am not a journalist. I am not interested in particular episodes. I am trying to look at the past to uncover its lessons. The only specific instance that I mentioned here is my membership. In fact, I deliberately avoided details that could be of any use to the enemies of the movement.

But I think the movement should be self-critical. And to be self-critical is to know what happened in the past, not in order to denigrate it — let me repeat that — but in order to learn from it.

I think the problem in this country today is the existence of two organizations — the old and the new. The new one seems to be forgetting about the past, instead of learning from it. A lot of mistakes are repeated. That is not the Marxist way of doing things. You ought to look back every now and then. Not for the purpose of exposure. I am more interested in finding the main thrusts and the specific features, in the hope of identifying those specific laws that govern the revolutionary movement in this country.

Q: I think all of us are familiar with the “divide and

conquer' tactic. I think that is the root of Dr. Nemenzo's critique of the women's movement. The secondary differentiations are used to obscure the primary ones. That criticism is valid. We have seen that happen time and again. In fact, this is precisely what needs to be overcome in terms of the Muslims in the south. However, it is also necessary to draw from the fullness and the richness of the critique based on groups not defined along class categories. I think it is passive to assume that a Marxist movement, ipso facto, will take care of the questions posed by that critique of the women's or gay movement, or those groups based on caste in India. The secondary contradictions must be understood. We must clearly see our way through, in order to better see the relationships with the primary contradictions.

For another point, the women's movement embraces a spectrum. At one end, there may be groups that simplify all the evils in this world to patriarchy, with the attendant solution of reducing the male population to that which is necessary for procreation. But this view is, I think, rejected by most women. There is a spectrum. So I think the solid critique raised by the women's movement, among other movements, must be taken. It is not quite fair to take these groups and simply say that they are counter-productive or divisive. Let it rest simply that many women – in both the First and Third Worlds – appreciate the contributions made by the women's movement. This I take as a whole. My plea is for somebody who regards himself as a Marxist to reexamine this. The cultural revolution, said to be more difficult, would include this problem.

N: I fully appreciate your presentation of the problem, as long as we bear in mind that this is a secondary contradiction. What I was really criticizing was not the women's movement itself, but the tactics of some very articulate sectors of that movement who pose the contradictions in

the world today as that between man and woman. The way you presented it is well appreciated. I accept the point.

Q: How will you periodize the history of the Philippine communist movement? What would be the different periods and what were their characteristics? How are they reflected in terms of policy changes?

N: Before I answer that, let me just go back to an earlier comment. I am rather disturbed by it. The movements here will never progress if we cover up the past, our history. It is only by doing a critical review and reflection of our past that we can move forward.

You are asking about periodization. Every historian knows how difficult and messy this is. It should not be treated as part of the objective reality. A periodization is just as means of organizing your views.

I would probably trace back the first period to the pre-party days. It was during the struggles between the left-wing headed by Evangelista and the right-wing within the Congreso Obrero. This culminated in the formation of the PKP. I would make that as a landmark. In 1938, the merger of the PKP and the SPP set in motion processes that became more pronounced and visible during the Japanese period. After that, there was a short interregnum which saw the surfacing of contradictions within the party – the struggles between those who wished to resume the fight against the national government and the so-called “appeasers”. That was also the period when the party had no clear line of leadership. It was a messy historical juncture. But then, another period would start from 1948 to about 1954 when the party decided on armed struggle. In 1950, it decided to take the armed struggle to a decisive point.

Then, there was the setback which became very apparent after 1954 when whole battalions and field commanders were surrendering. It was then that the party shifted its main thrust from armed struggle to parliamentary struggle. This period lasted for about ten years, up to 1964. The main concern then was mere survival. While there was an attempt to revive the PKP in 1964, contradictions within would emerge. The year 1968 would be another landmark because of the formation of the new communist party. I suppose the declaration of martial law would change the whole thing. That would be another period.

Q: So it began with the workers' movement. From my little knowledge of the history of the Huks, the party became more peasant-based later. When did this shift occur? What has been the effect of this, especially on the workers' movement?

N: At the start, the PKP was predominantly a workers' party. It had a peasant arm identified with leading figures at the KPMP led by Jacinto Manahan who later defected. But there was a massive influx of peasant members with the merger in 1938. When the war broke out, the center of gravity shifted from the city to the countryside. It was from then on that the PKP became dominantly and objectively a peasant party. The word "peasant" has to be qualified here, though. If a sociological survey of party membership were done at the same time, it would have been found that the rural proletariat (the surplus labor of the rural areas) and not the peasant in the traditional sense, participated in the movement very actively.

Q: Just for the record, for the benefit of everybody — were you expelled by the PKP or did you expel yourself?

N: I did not come here to talk about myself. I wanted to talk about the movement I studied. But anyway, it was mutual, I suppose.